

Quarterly Report
Covering January 1, 2007 to March 31, 2007
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Project Title

Fish Passage in Montana Culverts Phase II – Passage Goals

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Introduction

This progress report covers work completed between January 1, 2007 and March 31, 2007. Work on the project during this period has been entirely devoted to data analysis and preparation of the final report for the project.

Project Objective

Culverts are a common and often cost effective means of providing transportation intersections with naturally occurring streams or rivers. Fish passage and fish habitat considerations are now typical components of the planning and design of waterway crossings. Many culverts in Montana span streams that support diverse fisheries. The health of these fisheries is an essential element of a recreational industry that draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to Montana annually. Transportation system planners, designers and managers recognize that fish passage through Montana's culverts is a concern. However, there is much contention concerning the impact that a culvert can have on a fishery. Recent basin-wide studies in Montana (Phase I of this project - final report in November 2004) indicate that the tools that some planners and designers promote for forecasting fish passage concerns may be overly conservative. This is

reflected in the diversity of fish passage goals that are being considered by state agencies in the Northwest. Some managers contend that all culverts should pass all fish at all times, whereas others suggest that this is an unrealistic criterion, particularly during high flow events. Which species, life stages, and how many individuals must have fish passage access for how long, are questions that are often brought forward during discussions on the design and retrofitting of culverts to accommodate fish passage concerns. ***The problem is that for fish species and settings in Montana, the timing and number of fish that must pass a culvert to maintain viable species diversity in the watershed is unknown.***

Progress

Data analysis and preparation of the final reports for the project are underway. Rather than include incomplete subsets of the results here, it is appropriate to delay presentation of results until the final report. It is anticipated that a draft of the final report will be distributed to reviewers in early May 2007, in anticipation of the June 30, 2007 completion date.

Budget

Expenditures for this cycle are largely attributable to graduate student stipends. The planned and actual expenditures appear to deviate, but only because of the timing for which faculty stipends are billed. Faculty stipends were, and will be, distributed in the months of January 2007 to June 2007. These expenditures are encumbered but not yet posted. They will be posted to the appropriate months soon, probably in late April, and will be reflected as monthly expenditures retroactively. This is intentional because faculty stipends are the easiest budget category for MSU to supplement if there were unplanned expenditures in other budgetary categories that must be made up for in order to balance the books at the end of the project. All costs to the project have either been expended or encumbered, and when encumbrances are posted the expenditures at the end of the project equal the grant amount.

